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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HELSINKI 001420

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR A/S JONES AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT GRENCIK

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [RS](#) [CH](#) [FI](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY JONES VISIT TO HELSINKI

REF: A. HELSINKI 1221

[B](#). HELSINKI 1360

[C](#). HELSINKI 1281

[D](#). HELSINKI 1288

Classified By: Ambassador Earle I. Mack for reasons 1.5(B) and (D)

#### Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Your visit to Helsinki, coming just days after the U.S. election, will be an excellent opportunity to review our bilateral and multilateral agenda with Finnish leaders, and to stress the value of our close relationship with Finland and Europe. Finnish President Halonen has sent a telegram to the White House offering President Bush her "heartfelt congratulations" on his re-election and expressing her confidence that the "excellent cooperation" between the two presidents will continue in the future. In a similar message PM Vanhanen stressed the "great responsibility and worldwide trust" connected with the U.S. Presidency; in earlier comments he had underlined the importance of the trans-Atlantic partnership in facing issues of global concern.

[1](#)2. (C) The Finns will use the opportunity to ask what changes in U.S. foreign policy may be in the wings. They will also want to hear your assessment of events in Russia after Beslan. They will expect you to ask about their new White Paper on foreign and security policy, which reaffirms Finland's nonalignment but keeps open the NATO option, supports the EU's rapid reaction force, and commits the GoF to signing the Ottawa Convention by 2012. We recommend you thank the Finns for their support for reconstruction in Iraq (including a commitment of one million euros for the UN protection force), and for their multiple contributions in Afghanistan. End Summary.

#### Assessing the Election

[1](#)3. (SBU) On November 3, before the result of the U.S. Presidential election was known, Finnish President Halonen, PM Vanhanen, and Speaker of Parliament Lipponen all said they did not expect the outcome of the election to affect bilateral relations, which Halonen termed "stable and good." Halonen (who was attending an EU meeting in Brussels, and may have felt the need to speak guardedly) added, however, that if President Bush were returned to office she hoped the Administration would re-visit its Iraq policy. PM Vanhanen spoke in broader terms: "Issues such as worldwide cooperation, general stability, terrorism, and global development continue to feature on the agenda ... and here a good partnership between Europe and the United States is needed." On November 4, Halonen and Vanhanen both sent congratulatory telegrams to the White House. Halonen offered President Bush her "warm greeting and ... heartfelt congratulations," as well as "my anticipation that our excellent cooperation will continue in the future." In his message PM Vanhanen stressed the "great responsibility and worldwide trust" connected with the U.S. Presidency. An editorial in the "Helsingin Sanomat," Finland's leading daily, argued that "it takes two to build bridges, and Europeans would be wise to do their part. The result of a democratic election has to be respected. Creating more conflicts across the Atlantic does not on this side of the ocean serve anybody's true interests."

[1](#)4. (C) The Finns, with their strong preference for multilateral action and their commitment to the trans-Atlantic relationship, will want to know if any gesture to Europe will be forthcoming from a second Bush administration. FM Tuomioja may also express to you the hope that the second administration will adopt a more "multilateralist" strategy during its second term (ignoring the fact that the first administration spent months working for unity in the UNSC before Operation Iraqi Freedom). The PM and FM may ask whether Russian ratification of the Kyoto Protocol will make a difference to the USG, or whether any new initiatives can be expected in the arms control area.

Iraq

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15. (C) The GoF -- FM Tuomioja in particular -- was critical of OIF, which began only days after the Finnish general election in March 2003. Then, in the weeks that followed, new Center Party PM Anneli Jaatteenmaki was forced out of office over allegations that she had released classified MFA documents regarding conversations with the U.S. on Iraq. Center's Matti Vanhanen took over as PM, and since then has sought to calm the domestic political waters roiled by "Iraq-Gate." In March 2004, two Finnish businessmen visiting Baghdad as part of an exploratory trade delegation were killed, further decreasing GoF interest in Finns participating in any mission inside Iraq for the foreseeable future.

16. (C) Nevertheless, the GoF has sought and found ways to assist in Iraqi reconstruction. They made an early commitment of one million euros to help fund the UN Protection Force (reiterated by President Halonen in her UNGA speech); the Finns have provided ten instructors for the police academy in Amman; and they are prominent as one of the small donors (five million euros) to the IRFFI. In your conversations with the PM and FM, they will be interested in your assessment of how reconstruction in Iraq is proceeding, including the prospects for free and fair elections.

#### Afghanistan

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17. (C) Finland has been a solid partner in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is now one of the largest recipients of Finnish development assistance (10 million euros this year), and approximately 70 Finnish troops are serving under ISAF auspices, including CIMIC troops in Kabul and twenty soldiers with the UK/Finnish/Norwegian PRT in the north. Several Finnish politicians have visited Afghanistan, including the Parliamentary Human Rights caucus. We recommend you thank the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister for Finland's early contributions to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

#### Russia

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18. (C) The stability of political and commercial relations with Russia -- and therefore the stability of Russia itself -- will always be of vital importance to the Finns. In recent conversations, they have said that while day-to-day interactions with the Russians continue on track, Finns are concerned about long-term trends. FM Tuomioja told the Ambassador September 15 that "the signs are less encouraging than they have been for some time." (Ref A) It is understandable that "the appalling events in Beslan have affected Russia seriously," said the FM; "we only hope they draw the right conclusions." He worries that Putin seems to be relying more and more on people who are not by inclination natural democrats. Your Finnish interlocutors will be very interested to hear your own assessment, and likely will quiz you about the atmosphere you encountered in your most recent trip to Moscow.

#### The White Paper

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19. (C) The GoF's long-awaited white paper on national security policy was completed and sent to Parliament for their review in September. In it the government reaffirms Finland's nonalignment, although "applying for membership in the Alliance will remain a possibility ... in the future." The White Paper has since been criticized by some of the nation's most committed trans-Atlanticists for being too timid in its treatment of Finland's need for allies. One commentator said the White Paper was "born old" in failing to note modern realities in Russia. MP Liisa Jaakonsaari, the SDP's chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, criticized Finland's foreign policy as lacking direction.

110. (C) The White Paper probably represents the limits of the possible insofar as NATO membership is concerned, given that public opinion remains strongly against membership. (One recent poll showed 80% opposed.) Foreign Minister Tuomioja told us last year that he did not expect the NATO question to arise during this Parliamentary term (2003-2007). But that does not change the reality of Finland's position. The Finns see NATO as the foundation for trans-Atlantic security. They have made NATO interoperability one of the guiding principles of their armed forces, they are strong supporters of PfP, and they welcomed the Baltic nations' entry into the Alliance. (MFA PolDir Lyra worried, though, that NATO planners were pressing the three new members too hard to shift capabilities away from territorial defense to crisis management.) The White Paper does state that "Finland considers a strong trans-Atlantic relationship to be important for the security of Europe;" Finland will foster that relationship on a bilateral basis with the U.S., as well as through the EU and the PfP.

11. (C) The White Paper restated that territorial defense is the fundamental mission of Finland's armed forces, but commits the nation for the first time to providing combat troops to EU rapid reaction forces. It mentions repeatedly the need to combat terrorism, but does not provide much information on how the GoF is organized to do that. And in one of its most controversial decisions, it commits Finland to signing the Ottawa Convention by 2012, and destroying its anti-personnel landmines by 2016.

The Finnish EU Presidency (July-December 2006)  
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12. (C) The Finns may be the last EU president under the old system, since the Constitution Treaty is scheduled to take effect during their tenure. The Finns are acutely aware of this, and have already started preparations to make the most of the opportunity. (We are told, for example, that one of the reasons for FM Tuomioja's surprise choice of Pilvi-Sisko Vierros-Villeneuve to succeed Markus Lyra as Political Director was her past experience in Brussels during Finland's last presidency.) The Finns have said that strengthening trans-Atlantic relations will be one of the themes of their presidency.

China Arms Embargo  
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13. (C) We have heard that there is a split within MFA between those (including Vierros-Villeneuve, currently Nonproliferation chief) who genuinely believe that the Code of Conduct can and should be made to function efficiently to stop the kinds of high-tech exports that the Chinese most want, and those in the human rights section, who agree with the U.S. that lifting the embargo would send the wrong signal. The Embassy recommends that you stress to the FM that lifting the EU arms embargo sends the wrong message at the wrong time to China, and may give the Chinese Government the impression that it can act with impunity with regard to serious violations of human rights.

14. (C) In conversations with the Ambassador reported in Refs C and D, MFA Under Secretary Laajava and Presidential Chief of Staff Kalela both agreed in principle with the reasoning behind the U.S. position. The Ambassador asked whether a call from Secretary Powell to President Halonen would be useful, caveating the question by saying we would not want to embarrass either President Halonen or the Secretary by putting them in an awkward position. Both Laajava and Kalela said that such a call might be useful, although neither could guarantee it would change Finland's position.

War on Terror  
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15. (C) Finland is an ally in the fight against global terrorism, but Finns believe the possibility of an attack on Finnish soil remote. FM Tuomioja in particular is concerned that civil liberties not be lost in the rush to investigate and prevent terrorist attacks. For example, he has been critical of U.S. policy regarding the Guantanamo detainees and the Abu Ghraib scandal and may raise these with you.

Trafficking-in-Persons  
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16. (U) Tuomioja may complain to you about Finland's Tier 2 ranking. We recommend that you thank the Finns for hosting the September OSCE/ODIHR conference on the rights of trafficking victims, and note the passage of new legislation making trafficking a separate legal offense -- but stress that a better record in prosecution and victim assistance is needed.

The "Helsinki Process"  
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17. (SBU) Tuomioja is the co-chair (with the Tanzanian FM) of the Helsinki Group, the steering committee for the Helsinki Process that was launched in 2002 to promote a more just and equitable globalization process. Tuomioja and President Halonen are interested in the negative effects of globalization and deeply committed to fostering a North-South dialogue aimed at ameliorating these effects. To that end, the Helsinki Process sponsors regular conferences and seminars about global problem solving, the global economic agenda, and human security in all of its forms. President Halonen's speech before the UNGA in September centered on globalization, its inherent inequities, and the urgent need for the developed and developing world to work together to redress these. (On the same day Halonen suggested to the press in New York that an international tribunal be formed to determine the legality of OIF.) For his part, the Foreign Minister's bilateral meetings in New York during the UNGA's opening week were all related to the Helsinki Process. It is

possible the Foreign Minister will raise this during your meeting. You may wish to ask him about the Helsinki Group's upcoming report on globalization, due to be released in the spring of 2005.

MACK